

Ravaged Hayes just fail

Hayes 2, Wycombe Wanderers 2

FOR sheer guts, determination and bravery above the call of duty no-one could have denied Hayes victory in this electrifying FA Trophy clash at Church Road.

Their injury-ravaged team creaked and groaned and strained at the seams as Wycombe came at them from all angles but it was only in the last five minutes that a notable victory was snatched from their deserving grasp.

Wycombe were by far the more impressive side; the side more able to attack; the side more eager to attack and that's the way it had to be.

They were a goal adrift from the 18th minute and incredibly two from the 78th.

As the battle raged manager Martin Hackett saw Laurie Craker reduced to a limp; Pat Morrissey cut off with a leg injury and goalkeeper Alan Jarrett reeling from a series of blows to the head.

Neil Bunker was missing from defence and Terry Brown from attack so Wycombe had it all going for them, even the backing of 90 per cent of the large crowd, indeed a welcome sight at Church Road.

However as the game quickly boiled to a thrill and spill a minute cup tie it was Hayes who struck the first blow from their first corner.

Vic Akers swung the ball in and Gary Gilbert stunned the fanatical Wycombe supporters with a free header.

The underdogs were showing their teeth. Hayes came again and Wycombe didn't like it.

Morrissey was the target for some tigerish tackling and Paul Birdseye was soon in the book to be followed by Laurie Craker after a battle on the Wycombe goal-line that reached titanic proportions.

By half time Wycombe were showing their power in attack. Jarrett made one of his momentous saves by racing to the edge of his area

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to smother the ball at Stuart Akins' feet.

The battle boiled in and around the Hayes area even more in the second half.

Morrissey stopped a shot from Terry Scott on his goal line and then Atkins somehow put a clear header over the top as the goal yawned in front of him.

The high drama continue as another shot from Steve Long brushed the outside of a Hayes post and then Jarrett dived at the feet of Atkins to save the day.

With 15 minutes to go the crucial substitution game was played with Dave Hatton on for Gilbert and Dylan Evans replacing the aged-looking Keith Mead.

Within seconds it looked as if the move was success for Hayes and tragedy for Wycombe.

His first touch of the ball took Hatton into the Wycombe area. Dylan's first touch was a barge in the back. Hatton went sprawling and Morrissey calmly put away the penalty.

Still it was a shot by Evans in the last five minutes that finally broke the heart of this gallant Hayes defence.

The ball hit Morrissey on the hand and Howard Kennedy got his shot home via Jarrett's hand which tipped the ball against a post but not enough to turn it away.

A minute later it was 2-2 as Long got the touch to a free kick. Wycombe had got the replay their non-stop aggression deserved.



Gary Gilbert heads Hayes first goal against Wycombe in their exciting FA Trophy clash. Picture: Evening Mail.